The Fundamental School Concept

A Commitment to Excellence
The Right to Choose

An articulated program involving Cowan Fundamental Elementary, Arcade Fundamental Middle, and El Camino Fundamental High Schools

The Concept
Our focus is on fully developing the minds of all learners. Students, teachers, administrators, and support staff make a commitment to excellence as the standard. Our energies, resources, and efforts are directed toward maximizing the learning success of each student to such a degree that every day, in every classroom, each student will learn something worth remembering for a lifetime.

The Philosophy of a fundamental school is guided by the principles of Educare. It comes from ‘educere’, a Latin word meaning to lead out. We strive to elicit values that are inherent to mankind through our educational program. Our program of ‘educare’ seeks to elicit only the best qualities in students and to help them understand how to maintain both an inner balance and a positive relationship with the world at large.

- **Contract:** A document that assures alignment between students, parents, teachers, and administrators and ensures commitment to a rich learning environment. Choice has responsibility.

- **Communication** between students, parents, teachers, and administrators on a regular basis is critical to success. Student performance is our priority.

- **Accountability:** Students, teachers, parents, and administrators can expect follow through and attention to detail as normal protocol. All school and classroom policies are completed thoroughly, fairly, and consistently.

- **Excellence:** Our behavior and academic goals are second to none. We provide the support needed to maximize the success of all students.

- **Discipline:** We promote and support an environment where self-discipline is nurtured and respected. A positive and focused learning environment for all students is inherent.
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The Fundamental Concept of Education:

- Administrators encourage staff/student/parent interaction providing opportunities for collaboration and enhancing the school environment.

- Teachers meet and exceed existing NCLB and state standards; they adhere to a standards-based curriculum, strive for academic excellence for all learners, and are committed to meeting the needs of students. Classroom instruction is characterized by affect, structure, and challenge.

- Students have a positive attitude toward academic excellence. They contribute to a focused learning environment and assume responsibility for their behavior in all areas of school life.

- Parents support the school, teachers, and their students in striving to meet academic goals. They maintain high expectations, monitor progress, and ensure education. Educational excellence remains a high priority in the home setting.

The unique characteristic of the Fundamental School is The Commitment To Excellence

Student commitments: Elementary, Middle School and High School (except where noted)

- I will sign and adhere to the Fundamental contract.
- I will abide by the 3 R’s (Respect, Responsibility, and Readiness).
- I will become an active participant in the school community.
- I will write down homework assignments.
- I will complete all assignments.
- I will arrive at school at least five minutes before the start of school and stay until the end of school every day. I will be in each class prepared to work when the bell rings.
- I will do whatever it takes to learn. I will always work, think, and behave in the best way I know.
- I will raise my hand and ask questions if I do not understand something in class. I will complete my homework every night, and I will seek help (ex. Tutoring, study buddy, office hours) if I have a problem with my homework.
- If I make a mistake, I will tell the truth and accept personal responsibility for my actions. I am responsible for my own behavior.
- I will always behave in a respectful and responsible manner and be ready for the work of school.
- I will never engage in academic dishonesty.
- I will develop into a self-sufficient life-long learner.
- I will complete 10 hours of documented community service for middle school. (M)
- I will serve as a tutor, if capable: avail myself to tutoring when needed or upon recommendation. (M) (H)
- I will complete twenty documented hours of community service by the end of Senior Year. (H)
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**Parent Commitment:** Elementary, Middle School and High School (except where noted)

- We will sign and adhere to the Fundamental Contract.
- We will make every attempt to minimize or eliminate doctor appointments, vacations, and other discretionary absences during the school day.
- We will join PTSA/Boosters, or both.
- We will create rewards and consequences at home for the school performance.
- When tutoring is recommended by teachers, counselors, or administrators, we will have our child attend tutoring on a regularly scheduled basis.
- We will make sure that our child arrives at school at least five minutes before the start of school and stay until the end of school every day.
- We will do whatever it takes to support our child’s learning.
- We will provide space for and monitor homework.
- We will always make ourselves available to our child, the school, and address any concerns they may have.
- If our child is to be absent from school due to illness, we will notify the attendance office prior to the start of school.
- We will carefully read all correspondence sent home from school (including progress reports).
- We understand that our child must follow the school’s rules so as to protect the safety, interests and rights of all individuals at the school.
- We will hold our child responsible for his or her behavior and actions.
- We will take a proactive stance in contacting our child’s teachers whenever concerns arise.
- We will attend Back to School Night each year.
- We will review, sign, and return each of the eight grade reports and contact staff as needed. (M) (H)
- We will review our child’s four-year plan on an annual basis. (H)

**Staff Commitment:** Elementary, Middle School and High School (except where noted)

- We will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all students.
- We will model behaviors that exhibit Respect, Responsibility and Readiness.
- We will enforce a differentiated school-wide discipline policy that reinforces the school’s belief that all students merit a safe and alcohol/drug-free learning environment.
- We will provide a combination of Affect/Structure/Challenge in our classrooms. We will collaborate regularly with colleagues to seek and implement more effective strategies for helping each student achieve his or her academic potential.
- We will follow a common, concise set of essential curricular standards, and teach to them on a roughly common schedule, using state standards as a guide.
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- We will create and refine engaging, rigorous, standards-based lessons and assignments based on shared best practices with the guiding question: Are students learning?
- We will hold students, parents, and each other to the highest standards of performance.
- Each staff member will have a website (containing contact info, class rules/procedures, and links to student resources) and update it at least annually. (H)
- We will return parent contacts by the end of the next school day.
- We will update homework hotlines regularly. (M)
- We will provide 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th graders with daily planners that are used by all of these students and hold them accountable for using them. (M) (H)
- We will distribute report cards eight times per year (signed by parent and returned to “homeroom.” (per 2). (M) (H)
- We will sign grade checks on Fridays as needed. (M) (H)
- We will frequently use common assessments and results to reflect on and improve instruction for improved student learning. (M) (H)
- We will ensure students hear the bulletin each day. (M) (H)
- We will provide classroom as well as school newsletters. (H)
- We (all instructional staff) will post office hours. (H)

School Commitments:

- We will exhibit a strong open communication with parents, students, and the community.
- We will return parent contacts by the end of the next school day.
- We will keep the school web site and exterior sign current and relevant.
- At each level of the articulated fundamental program (elementary, middle, and high school) schools make commitments and require commitments that pertain to the curriculum, the staff, the students, and the parents.
- Communication opportunities for articulation meetings are provided to staff in order to ensure student success.
- Shared commitments exist among:
  - Cowan Fundamental Elementary School
  - Arcade Fundamental Middle School
  - El Camino Fundamental High School